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Tuesday, 19 March 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Churkin/Mr. Pankin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Carr
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. Araud
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Kim Sook
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2013/133)

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Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2013/133)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, His Excellency Mr. Bob Carr, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, His Excellency Mr. Villy Søvndal, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, His Excellency Mr. Erkki Tuomioja.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas, Special Representative of the European Union for Afghanistan, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2013/164, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Australia. I also wish to draw Council members' attention to document S/2013/133, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

I welcome the presence here today of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and I invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: I am pleased to brief the Security Council today on the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I am grateful to the Russian delegation for organizing this open debate on a crucially important subject.

This has been an intense period of activity as we look ahead to 2014. The United Nations is reflecting on its future role, and we are preparing for the challenges ahead. Our core priorities should guide us going forward. We should continue providing good offices, including support for elections, and maintain our work for reconciliation and regional cooperation. We must stand firm for human rights, and we must advance development. Humanitarian action is also crucial to our future role. It is especially important in order for us to address Afghanistan's chronic vulnerability and the impact of the transition. I would like to speak briefly on all of those issues today.

Afghanistan's political climate is dominated by the 2014 elections. Broad participation and a credible process are essential to reaching the goal of a widely accepted leadership transition. Let me stress that the elections are Afghan-led and Afghan-managed. Now is the time to take critical decisions. The Government has committed to making the elections an inclusive, consultative and transparent process. I welcome the active and responsible participation of all stakeholders in building a widely accepted electoral framework. I also welcome President Karzai's emphasis on adopting electoral legislation at the opening of the National Assembly. Agreement on an impartial, credible and independent mechanism for electoral dispute resolution will be critical. Another core element is the appointment of a respected, widely accepted chairperson to the Independent Electoral Commission. That Commission, along with the Ministry of Finance and donors, will have to engage seriously on the task of finding solutions to electoral funding that are realistic and satisfactory to all.

The Government favours an electronic national identity card project. That is an important initiative with wide-ranging potential applications. It should be used, to the extent possible, in the 2014 and 2015 elections. At the same time, it is important to understand that there may be few improvements in voter identification for elections during those years. That makes other checks and balances, including generally agreed-on rules of the game and anti-fraud measures, all the more essential. The principle of respect for the independence of the electoral management body in the conduct of its constitutional duties is vital.

Afghanistan's greatest need is for peace. I welcome January's joint United States-Afghan declaration supporting greater coherence in reconciliation efforts. Expectations must be realistic. Reconciliation efforts will not be quick or easy. The United Nations is pushing for a culture of peace, including support for a second phase of the Afghan People's Dialogue on Peace. Afghanistan's people must come together, not only to shun conflict but also to assume leadership and ownership of the transition process for the sake of a united Afghanistan. That is essential if we are to end the more than 30 years of conflict and establish true and lasting peace.

Our human rights efforts are built on constructive engagement. We have reported on the torture and ill-treatment of conflict-related detainees. A presidential fact-finding commission also heard widespread testimony of abuse and put forward 11 recommendations to address the problem. On civilian casualties, the Government and international forces have taken measures to reduce the adverse impact of their operations. Anti-Government groups must now live up to their public statements and international obligations and cease targeting civilians, using children in suicide operations, attacking public places and using victim-activated pressure-plate explosives. Such actions are crimes under international law.

I am especially concerned about the 20 per cent increase in civilian casualties among women and girls in 2012. UNAMA's monitoring of civilian casualties prompted two statements from the Taliban that perhaps indicate a willingness to engage. I encourage a meaningful dialogue aimed at reducing the intolerable, continuing death toll and at protecting civilians. I welcome the speech President Karzai gave on International Women's Day, especially his focus on raising the awareness of gender issues among men. But I remain deeply disturbed that, despite some improvements in prosecuting cases of violence, there is still a pervasive climate of impunity in Afghanistan when it comes to the abuse of women and girls, who have the inviolable right to live free of fear or attacks. Women and girls are key to a better future for Afghanistan; protecting them is central to peace, prosperity and stability for everyone in the country. That calls for strict application of the Elimination of Violence against Women Law and ensuring that women and girls can participate more actively in public life.

We have to strengthen the way we provide development assistance in order to strengthen Afghan ownership. For its part, the Government must maintain momentum on putting in place the economic governance reforms needed to increase the sustainability of security and political transitions. Tackling the illicit economy is also critical to boosting economic confidence. The High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption, together with the United Nations, has documented the scope of the corruption that is tearing at Afghanistan's economic and social fabric. I am also concerned that the Opium Risk Assessment shows an increase in poppy cultivation. But there have been positive developments on the counter-narcotics front. Earlier this month, Afghan authorities made their largest seizure so far this year, taking some 23 tons of heroin, morphine and precursor chemicals.

In addition to counter-narcotics, we face the continuing challenge of responding to the needs of returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). I am committed to finding lasting solutions to post-conflict displacement. We have elements for success in the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries and in the national Afghan policy on IDPs.

We must prepare to look ahead beyond 2014. In a recent meeting with United Nations officials, Afghan representatives emphasized that they will need not less United Nations engagement, but engagement of a different kind. They consistently called for better coordination in the work of agencies, funds and programmes, so as to prevent gaps and overlaps, among themselves and with others. The Afghan representatives also broadly appreciated the need for a special political mission, with an evolving focus and scope. The United Nations must reinforce Afghan efforts. We aim to strengthen Afghan political processes and institutions. We want to boost the ability to deliver nationally and in different regions. We must bring to a close the time of parallel structures and efforts by the international community and fully integrate our support for Afghanistan.

To fulfil its mandate, the Mission must maintain its ability to reach out across the country and to meet the many demands it faces during this crucial period. As such, while the budget of UNAMA for 2013 reflected significant reductions, I do not envisage additional reductions for 2014. We can then more realistically

assess the reorientation of the United Nations presence in Afghanistan after the transition.

The success we have achieved so far comes thanks in large measure to the dedication of my Special Representative Ján Kubiš and all of the women and men — national and international — who have worked with commitment and dedication. We are ultimately responsible for their security and their ability to support the Afghan people.

We are approaching a moment of transition in Afghanistan, a country that has survived decades of upheaval. Let us work as hard as possible to ensure that this transition leads to the stable, prosperous and safe future that the country's people deserve.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important meeting, which includes the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) mandate. I also wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of March.

We convey our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his remarks, his presence and his report (S/2013/133), which provides a comprehensive picture of the situation on the ground. I also extend my appreciation to Special Representative Kubiš for joining us today. And I wish to thank the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Carr, for honouring us with his presence and participation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Council for the spirit of cooperation and openness shown during the course of negotiations. A special thanks goes to Ambassador Quinlan and his team at the Australian Mission to the United Nations for the able manner in which they led the process.

In just two days, on 21 March, the Afghan New Year will begin, a year in which transition to full Afghan responsibility is central to our efforts, a year that will take us to the next elections, a year to bring an end to war, and a year for building confidence and resilience.

Since the adoption of the UNAMA mandate last year, Afghanistan and the international community have placed a new focus on the needs of the transition period, which involves strengthening peace and security and the realization of national priorities. Together with the international community, we developed the parameters of future cooperation to ensure the building of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan that is able to stand on its own feet. We did that through continuing dialogue with our partners and agreements made at the NATO Summit in Chicago last May, at the Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference in Kabul in June and at the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan in July. More will need to be done to crystallize all aspects of cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community, including the shaping of our relations within the region.

A successful and orderly transition to Afghan ownership and leadership is about a continuous focus on five priority areas.

First, strengthening Afghan national sovereignty and national ownership and leadership are central to transition. After more than a decade of shared efforts, the strengthening of sovereignty entails normalization through security, political and economic transition. For the Afghan people, national sovereignty means taking full responsibility for their destiny.

With the announcement of the fourth tranche of the transition in December 2012, the assumption of full security responsibility by Afghan forces is more tangible than ever. By the end of that stage, 87 per cent of the Afghan population will be living in areas where Afghan security forces are in charge of security.

The Afghan people are keenly focused on a successful political transition, and all eyes are on the election next spring. The Government of Afghanistan is committed to fair, democratic, transparent and inclusive elections in which the men and women of Afghanistan will again shape their political future. Preparations for the elections are well under way. There is an overwhelming consensus that a successful and credible election will be necessary for stability and lasting peace.

At the same time, peace talks and reconciliation with the armed opposition are essential for a successful election. The Afghan Government is doing its utmost to ensure the success of the reconciliation process. The High Peace Council recently took the necessary steps to galvanize the reconciliation efforts. The support of the international community, and in particular of some

countries in the region, is important for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process. As we work to move the peace process forward, the role of the Security Council will remain imperative. We welcome the adoption of resolution 2082 (2012), which refined the Taliban sanctions regime in view of Afghanistan's leadership of the reconciliation process.

Secondly, during transition and the decade of transformation to follow, the relationship between Afghanistan and our international partners will evolve. Strategic partnership agreements, such as those we finalized in the past two years, are key for shaping long-term relationships and for stability during the transition and beyond. Afghanistan has established bilateral strategic partnerships with a number of countries, including the agreement between Afghanistan and the United States signed in May, which was followed by the recognition of Afghanistan as a major non-NATO ally of the United States. Talks are ongoing to conclude the security agreement between the two countries, which will be finalized in due course. Just last month, we signed a strategic partnership with Norway. We are now defining the parameters of similar partnerships with Denmark and Finland. With the transition, Afghanistan is entering a new era of relations with international partners. We are committed to basing our strategic cooperation on bilateral frameworks, which is an important step towards the normalization of the situation.

Our close partnership with NATO has been a significant source of progress for stabilization efforts. We look forward to furthering our partnership into the transformation decade ahead. In that context, we welcome the important discussions that took place at the meetings of the NATO North Atlantic Council at the level of Defence Ministers held in Brussels on 21 to 22 February, where NATO took concrete steps towards planning improved capabilities and reinforced its commitment to the NATO post-2014 role of training, advising and assisting Afghan National Security Forces. Such strategic cooperation will ensure the future sustainability of Afghan National Security Forces.

Thirdly, economic transition and aid delivery will be crucial for the sustainability of the transition. That requires the commitment of the international community in supporting our self-reliance strategy through the transformation decade. The Tokyo Conference in July was about not letting the drawdown of international combat forces affect Afghanistan's strides towards stability and prosperity. It will be important to see how the realization of the mutual commitments made in Tokyo will help us to address humanitarian and development challenges, which is essential not only for stability but also for sustainability in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is committed to upholding the agreements made in Tokyo, which include commitments in the areas of equitable elections; good governance and the rule of law; human rights, including women's rights; and inclusive and sustainable development. We look forward to continuing to work with our international partners on the basis of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

The economic transition is also about improving aid effectiveness, ensuring alignment with national priorities, and accountability for and transparency of aid spending. Aid delivery and efficiency are particularly important at a time when not only do we face economic instability as a result of conflict, but unemployment and poverty remain significant problems. Building the capacity of Afghan institutions to address the challenges ahead will be essential. It is crucial that the international community's support be in line with national priorities and channelled through the Afghan budget, as agreed at the 2010 Kabul Conference. It is also important that aid delivery be based on emerging needs on the ground and directed to areas where need is greatest. Afghanistan is ready to be held accountable for every penny it spends. We believe that the commitments made in Tokyo will facilitate a sustainable economic future for Afghanistan.

Fourthly, relations with Afghanistan's neighbours and with countries in our greater region are critical for stability and progress. Afghanistan is developing its bilateral and multilateral relations in all areas with countries in the region. We are in the centre of the Heart of Asia Process and see that cooperation as essential for peace and stability. Our partnerships with all countries in the region can be mutually beneficial; Afghanistan can serve as an economic bridge in an increasingly globalized region that is seeking progress and prosperity. At the Heart of Asia meeting in Kabul in June 2012, participating countries agreed upon a series of confidence-building measures regarding a range of issues, a number of which were endorsed in February in Baku. We look forward to the next ministerial meeting in Almaty in April.

We are engaged with a number of countries on our path to normalization, which includes helping

our reconciliation process. Most recently, we have continued trilateral discussions with Pakistan and the United Kingdom, as well as other forums, to help cooperation. We are hopeful about the outcome of our joint efforts.

Fifthly, a successful transition will require effective partnership with the United Nations. Since 2001, the United Nations has been at the centre of the coordination of international efforts in Afghanistan, and we appreciate the important role it has played. More recently, we have seen how the United Nations is adjusting its role to meet the transition needs. In that regard, the United Nations underwent a comprehensive review of its activities in Afghanistan in 2011. In his recent report, the Secretary-General emphasizes the importance of realigning the relationship between the international community and the Government of Afghanistan, and it reflects on the role of the United Nations beyond the transition.

As we complete the transition and transfer full responsibility to the Afghan Government, we can envisage the normalization of United Nations activities in the years to come. Aid coherence, One UN and greater accountability are important for Afghanistan, for the United Nations itself and for donor countries. Afghanistan looks forward to close cooperation with UNAMA in the coming year as it continues its efforts towards the priority areas of good offices in support of Afghan-led political processes, human rights, development coherence and the coordination of humanitarian assistance. In that regard, we welcome the renewal of the UNAMA mandate, which has continually evolved to reflect and reinforce the principles of Afghan ownership and leadership.

The end of the transition will signal the beginning of a new chapter — one marked by national resilience and the strategic goal of self-reliance. While the nature of the international community's engagement with Afghanistan is evolving, its continued support will be vital. The full realization of sovereignty and self-reliance will make Afghanistan a more effective partner for the world, but achieving that requires the trust, confidence and long-term commitment of the international community. Afghanistan looks forward to lasting cooperation with our international partners towards enduring peace, stability and prosperity in the country.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, China, France, Guatemala, Luxembourg, Morocco, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2096 (2013).

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Carr (Australia): I am pleased that my first address to the Security Council is about the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I acknowledge the Russian presidency for the month of March. I acknowledge, as well, the presence of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Afghanistan's Permanent Representative, Zahir Tanin. I also recognize Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his leadership of the United Nations Mission in Kabul.

This year's UNAMA mandate will cover a crucial period for Afghanistan. The Government will work to address the economic and fiscal impact of transition, intensify its preparations for the presidential election in 2014, lead progress in the reconciliation process and take lead responsibility for security.

As the transition moves forward, UNAMA's support to Afghanistan will become more, not less, important. As Afghanistan moves through transition to its transformation decade, it is important to note the progress that has been made over the past 10 years. Through the leadership of its Government, the determination of its fine people and the support of the international community, Afghanistan has come a long way. Large parts of the country have been made significantly safer. Afghan people now live much longer. Nearly 8 million people are enrolled in schools today, including more than 2.7 million girls. Approximately 85 per cent of the population have access to health care. The Afghan economy is growing at 8 per cent per annum. Security gains have ensured that Afghanistan will never again be a safe haven for international terrorism. Development and governance gains have helped to ensure that the international

community will have a stable partner. I am confident that the years ahead will see the Afghan Government protect those gains.

But to achieve that, the international community must remain in Afghanistan. We must send a clear message that Afghanistan will not stand alone. International support has been instrumental to Afghanistan's progress. At the Chicago Summit and the Tokyo Conference last year, we committed to standing with Afghanistan well beyond transition.

The Council's mandate for UNAMA will provide the Mission with the certainty and capacity it needs to support Afghanistan. As the Secretary-General noted in his report (S/2013/133), it is essential that UNAMA be resourced to fulfil its mandate, this year and beyond, and to maintain a meaningful presence in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan will face some significant challenges. The next 12 months will set the stage for the completion of Afghanistan's political and security transitions in 2014. By the end of 2013, Afghanistan will have lead responsibility for security across the country — a major milestone. The Afghan National Security Forces have proved capable as transition has progressed. Australia is confident that, with consistent international support, their capacities will continue to improve, as will their ability to provide security for Afghanistan.

The Afghan Government must also implement economic and governance reforms to promote growth and fiscal responsibility. With international support, that Afghan-led reform process is under way.

UNAMA works with the Afghan Government and international partners to implement the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, under which the international community recognizes and meets Afghanistan's legitimate needs for assistance and Afghanistan remains committed to strengthening governance and promoting respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Advancing the opportunities for women and girls in Afghanistan will remain a major priority for Australia. We very much welcome the references in resolution 2096 (2013), on UNAMA, to the need for measurable objectives to secure the rights of women and girls, as well as the need to counter discrimination. We condemn absolutely all forms of violence against women and girls.

Afghanistan must also continue its progress in fighting corruption and bank fraud, strengthening human rights and building the capacity of State institutions. Support for UNAMA is an important element in those endeavours, and UNAMA's role in coordinating and delivering international assistance remains essential well beyond 2014.

In order to entrench good governance and conditions for growth, it is essential that Afghan society be underpinned by solid political foundations. The 2014 elections are fundamental. We encourage the Afghan Government to drive preparations for the presidential election.

As those elections near, it is critical that the Afghan Government set up an appropriate electoral framework. The Government must lead the way to inclusive elections which are accepted by the Afghan people. We encourage them to utilize international assistance and work with UNAMA to strengthen the integrity of the election process, consistent with the Mission's mandate.

A political settlement will be necessary in order to achieve a secure Afghanistan. Military force alone will not bring stability. Recent momentum in the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process is heartening. Our expectations must remain realistic. We support the High Peace Council's efforts to build the conditions for reconciliation, including by ensuring that the Security Council's Taliban sanctions regime is flexible enough to support an Afghan-led process.

As the Secretary-General notes, UNAMA's unique comparative advantage is its broad presence and political outreach. Adequate resources and an effective mandate will allow UNAMA to support Afghanistan through transition and beyond. UNAMA will therefore be able to meet its long-term commitment to the Government and the people of Afghanistan.

That mandate provides a sound basis for UNAMA to continue to support Afghanistan on behalf of the United Nations and the international community. Council members, and the wider UN membership, have a stake in Afghanistan's future security and stability. The adoption of resolution 2096 (2013) renewing UNAMA's mandate highlights the unity of purpose between the international community and the Afghan Government in promoting Afghanistan's future security and stability.

Australia has welcomed the responsibility of coordinating Security Council discussions on Afghanistan during our Council term. In that role, we will continue to work with Afghanistan and international partners to support the country through transition and beyond.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): At the outset, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. I welcome Special Representative Kubiš back to the Security Council and ask him to please share with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) staff and the United Nations country team our deep gratitude for their continued hard work and dedication. I should also like to thank Ambassador Tanin for his partnership and to congratulate Foreign Minister Carr and Ambassador Quinlan on Australia's assuming leadership of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) and Afghanistan-related resolutions in the Council.

Afghanistan and the international community are at an important juncture. As we have seen in recent weeks, challenges remain, but we continue to work together to achieve our shared goals. President Karzai visited Washington in January and discussed with President Obama strengthening Afghanistan's democratic institutions and supporting the country's long-term economic and social development. President Obama and President Karzai also reaffirmed the United States-Afghanistan enduring strategic partnership agreement that they signed in May 2012.

Security remains key. The Afghan National Security Forces now have the lead in overseeing security for nearly 90 per cent of the Afghan population, and with the recent announcement of the fourth tranche, 52 new districts in the north and centre of Afghanistan will soon be secured by Afghan forces.

As President Obama announced last month, more than 34,000 American troops will come home from Afghanistan by February of next year. We expect that the fifth and final tranche of the transition will be announced this spring, when Afghans will lead for security across their entire country.

While transitioning security responsibility to the Afghans is necessary for stability, it is not itself sufficient. In that regard, an inclusive and credible presidential election in 2014 is critical for the country's future and to sustaining international assistance to the people of Afghanistan. The results of the election must produce an outcome that is legitimately accepted by the Afghan people. The announcement of the election date by the Independent Election Commission is an important step, and its timely completion of a comprehensive operational plan will be another.

We note that Parliament is working on draft legislation to further establish a lasting electoral framework, including independent election institutions. It is important that respected and professional leaders be appointed to election institutions after a widely consultative process. We recognize the valuable contributions of Afghan civil society to those preparations and the essential work of the United Nations, notably the recent United Nations electoral needs assessment mission.

In addition, Afghan-led reconciliation is important for stability and the best way to end conflict and bring lasting peace to Afghanistan and the region. We continue to support the opening of an office in Doha, Qatar, to facilitate negotiations between the High Peace Council and the authorized representatives of the Taliban.

As a part of the outcome of any process, the Taliban and other armed opposition groups must end violence, break ties with Al-Qaida and accept Afghanistan's Constitution. The outcomes of peace and reconciliation must respect the historic achievements that a unified and sovereign Afghanistan has made over the past decade, including protecting the rights of all citizens of Afghanistan — women and men — as guaranteed under the Constitution.

Over the past decade, Afghan women have emerged from the total oppression imposed by Taliban rule. Women are essential partners in and contributors to the building of a strong civil society and a stable nation. Afghan women hold office at the national, provincial and local levels, and serve on the High Peace Council and in provincial peace councils. They start and run businesses of all kinds and organize to serve their communities and have their voices heard. As Afghanistan builds a better future, the contributions, intrinsic worth and fundamental dignity of Afghan women must continue to be embraced.

Afghanistan's progress is due primarily to the grit, determination and hard work of the Afghan people. It is they who have come this far. The international community has provided vital assistance along the way and will continue to do so.

Afghanistan's neighbours must play a constructive role in the creation of a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan. One vehicle is the Istanbul Process, which will have a ministerial meeting in Almaty next month and is expected to discuss the six confidence-building measures of counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism, trade, regional infrastructure, education and disaster management. Progress in those areas is vital for a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Since 2002, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has played an indispensable role in the country's progress. As Afghanistan continues its transition, UNAMA needs to remain a committed partner, and we as the Council need to sustain our support during this crucial time.

UNAMA has weathered significant budget reductions over the past two years, and we believe that those cuts have gone as far as they reasonably can. UNAMA's resources should be stabilized now and the Mission allowed to carry out its mandate with its core functions intact. UNAMA remains a priority and must be resourced as such. We appreciate the support of the United Nations in Afghanistan and are pleased to have extended UNAMA's mandate for another year.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his briefing and recent report (S/2013/133) on the situation in Afghanistan and the current activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I also thank Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan for his statement. I would also like to welcome the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Denmark and Finland.

Azerbaijan welcomes the adoption of resolution 2096 (2013) today, which extends the mandate of UNAMA for another year. In light of the challenges of the foreign military drawdown in Afghanistan, the United Nations should continue its important work in promoting peace and stability in the country and supporting the realization of the Afghan Government's priorities. The significant impact of budget cuts on UNAMA's presence throughout the country and its ability to deliver on its mandated tasks will require certain adjustments to its working methods and approaches. We underline the necessity of allocating adequate resources in order to enable the Mission to effectively carry out its core tasks.

During the reporting period, the Government of Afghanistan continued to progress towards the achievement of the objectives of the transition process. We welcome the Government's increasing assertion of ownership over peace and reconciliation in the country, as well as the ongoing efforts of the High Peace Council to establish conditions conducive to an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process. UNAMA's support to the Council's activities, the implementation of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme, and regional dialogue are important to the promotion of a unified vision among all Afghans on the peaceful future of the country.

The implementation of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework requires a vigorous and sustained engagement on the part of the Government and the international community in order to deliver on their respective commitments. The endorsement of the aid management policy and additional four national priority programmes by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board is a welcome development that will provide for the more rational allocation of donor resources in line with the Government's priorities.

The period under review marked the continuation of the quantitative decrease in security-related incidents. We note the successful operations by the Afghan and international security forces to prevent terrorist attacks in Kabul. The decrease in civilian casualties for the first time in six years is positive news, although the numbers are still high, largely due to targeted attacks against civilians by anti-Government elements. It is incumbent on all parties in Afghanistan to take maximum measures to avoid civilian casualties. Insurgents must denounce the tactic of targeting civilians, which contravenes religious and humanistic tenets and seriously undermines the ongoing reconciliation efforts.

The enhanced cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours and other counterparts within bilateral and multilateral mechanisms on a wide range of issues — including peace and reconciliation, regional security challenges, development and humanitarian assistance — is vital to the long-term stability of the country and the region. In this regard, we underline the particular importance of the Istanbul Heart of Asia Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan, which has already taken practical shape, while its activities have expanded significantly.

As a co-leader in counter-narcotics confidence-building measures (CBMs), Azerbaijan convened its meeting on 25 January in Baku. On 6 February, we hosted the fourth senior officials meeting of the Istanbul Process, which endorsed the implementation plans for all CBMs. We emphasize the need for the timely realization of all CBMs, and look forward to the next ministerial meeting of the Process, to be held next month in Almaty.

Afghanistan occupies a special place in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. My country has for many years been a part of international efforts in Afghanistan. It joined the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) at its inception and has increased its military participation therein. Last year, we took a decision to continue our partnership with NATO in the post-2014 training, advice and assistance mission in Afghanistan.

Azerbaijan provides its land and airspace to ISAF countries for transits to Afghanistan. This accounts for more than 35 per cent of all non-lethal transit. As the planning for the withdrawal of ISAF forces and equipment from Afghanistan is under way, the role of Azerbaijan as a transit country becomes more significant. The completion of new regional and national infrastructures, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad and the new Baku International Sea Trade Port will further enhance Azerbaijan's capacities.

Azerbaijan actively participates in relevant international and regional political initiatives aimed at promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan, including the Istanbul Heart of Asia Process, where we co-chair counter-narcotics and regional infrastructure confidence-building measures.

Determined as we are to stand by the Government of Afghanistan and its people in their legitimate aspirations to become a secure, self-reliant and self-sustaining State, Azerbaijan has been increasing its bilateral assistance through financial support and capacity-building programmes in military and other areas in Afghanistan. Last year, we earmarked €2 million for the Afghan National Army trust fund.

We attach great priority to assisting Afghanistan through the implementation of existing and the development of new capacity-building and training programmes and initiatives in non-military spheres, including the civil service, law enforcement, mine action, border control, customs, health and rehabilitation, transport and information, and communications technologies (ICT). Our continuous dialogue and interaction with our Afghan counterparts in these areas — in particular, the frequent visits in recent months to Baku and Kabul by high-level officials from various agencies of both countries — have further strengthened our bilateral relations. I am pleased to note that the Azerbaijan International Development Agency recently earmarked $150,000 for the United Nations Development Programme in support of the ICT sphere in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I would like to express my country's continued support for Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity, and to reaffirm our resolve to further support the efforts of the brotherly Afghan people to build a better future.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement and his recent report on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2013/133). I should also like to thank Ambassador Tanin for his important contribution. I should also like to recognize the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš at the helm of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and the leadership of Australia on this matter within the Security Council.

Today's debate is taking place at a decisive moment for Afghanistan as we look ahead to the dual transition that will take place in 2014: the political transition culminating in presidential and provincial elections in April 2014, and the security transition, which will see the conclusion of the withdrawal of International Security Assistance Force troops at the end of 2014, with the full transfer of security responsibilities to the Afghan security forces. Together, these events will signal a new phase of sovereignty and independence for Afghanistan. Attention must therefore be given not only to how to ensure the steps needed to achieve a successful transition, which is key to peace and stability in the country, but also the modalities and configuration of assistance from the international community following 2014, including the role of the United Nations and UNAMA, whose mandate the Security Council has today extended for another year.

With regard to the elections, it is of the utmost importance that all steps be taken to ensure that we reach April 2014 with an orderly electoral process. It will be essential for all Afghan institutions to agree on a legal framework that will govern this process and

endow it with clear ground rules. The decision of the Afghan authorities to request assistance from UNAMA in this area is a decidedly positive development. We hope that that support continues and produces tangible results.

We also understand that the ongoing professionalization of the Afghan National Security Forces, as well as respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, should continue to be central elements of a transition that institutionalizes the protection of civilians and ensures the leadership and civilian control of the security sector.

On that point we cannot fail to express concern over the number of civilian victims caused by the conflict, which, while less than recorded in 2012, continues to be unacceptable. The rise in the number of deliberate attacks against civilians merely because they are believed to support the Government is particularly alarming, as is the increase in the number of women and children killed or injured in that same period. All parties, in particular the anti-Government forces, responsible for most of the victims, should take the necessary measures to ensure the protection of civilians and to fulfil their obligations under international law.

For Argentina, dialogue and reconciliation are critical in Afghanistan in order to change the dynamic of the conflict and to address the security challenges. We understand that any national reconciliation process that is launched must be headed and led by the Afghans themselves. In that regard, we support the efforts of the High Peace Council. At the same time, we wish to recognize and welcome the steps taken by the Government of Pakistan so that such a process can take place. We hope that the emerging positive signs will lead to a dialogue with clear parametres and objectives.

With regard to the role of the United Nations in Afghanistan, we believe that UNAMA has a very important role in the transition phase and post-2014 in key areas, such as support for the electoral process, the promotion and protection of human rights, coordination between donors and the Government, the facilitation of the peace and reconciliation process, the coordination of humanitarian assistance, the return and rehabilitation of refugees and the capacity-building of the Afghan authorities and institutions, in order to meet the needs of its population and to increasingly ensure the exercise of economic, social and cultural rights in the context of ongoing sustainable development. We must therefore begin a process of reflection on UNAMA's future role up to and post-2014. A robust UNAMA with a clear mandate and the necessary resources for its implementation are issues of critical importance. That will signal that the international community continues to support a democratic, prosperous, stable and sovereign Afghanistan.

For that reason, we wish to express our satisfaction with the fact that the UNAMA mandate that we have renewed today maintains its basic features, including the Mission's role with regard to elections at the request of the Afghan authorities, and the emphasis on the protection of civilians and the monitoring of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Afghanistan, in particular with regard to women and children. In the light of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict (S/2013/149), we also welcome the fact that resolution 2096 (2013) continues to underscore the importance of implementing resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security.

UNAMA has also played, and should continue to play, a significant role in supporting Afghanistan's efforts to promote human rights. We encourage the Afghan authorities to continue strengthening an effective system of protection, bearing in mind in particular the recommendations made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in her most recent report on the situation in the country.

It would not be appropriate on our part to try to offer recommendations on the way in which the Afghan people and Government should resolve their difficulties. However, in conclusion, I would like to briefly point out three important issues for Argentina.

First, while we encourage the Afghan reconciliation process, we also believe that justice and the fight against impunity should be at the heart of the pursuit of lasting peace. For that reason, we believe that steps should be taken to strengthen the institutional capacity in order to ensure accountability in cases of massive human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity, in line with the recommendations in the annual report on the protection of civilians (S/2012/376) and in the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Secondly, according to the report of the Secretary-General, poppy cultivation has increased for the third consecutive year. That is to say that, despite the efforts

of the international community, the problem of the illicit trafficking of opiates continues to be a matter of serious concern. We understand that dealing with the issue requires a comprehensive strategy that takes into account supply and demand and the adoption of prohibition and socioeconomic measures. For Argentina, the issue of terrorism and the fight against drug trafficking are separate matters that require different and distinct strategies, as well as the clear commitment of the Government of Afghanistan, the States of the region and the international community.

Thirdly, we are convinced that the basis for solid democracy and stable and lasting peace in Afghanistan can be established only through a focus that includes the broader dimensions of economic, cultural and social development, the promotion and protection of human rights and the strengthening of the rule of law. That is the future that we desire for the country and to which the international community is committed.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would, first of all, like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his report on the situation in Afghanistan and the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (S/2013/133). Togo reiterates its congratulations to the Secretary-General and to the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We also thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his statement. Lastly, I welcome the ministers who have come to New York in order to take part in this debate convened by the Russian presidency of the Council.

The situation in Afghanistan remains at the heart of the concerns of the international community, which has spared no effort to promote sustainable peace and development in that country. As a result, the implementation of the Kabul process regarding good governance has made progress. International partners have supported the Afghan Government in the implementation and follow-up to the commitments made at the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan on 8 July 2012. Along those same lines, discussions on defining the objectives with regard to the core elements of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, which must be achieved before the meeting of senior officials in July, have continued. We hope that those objectives can be achieved within the set time frame. In the context of our debate, my delegation will take up five points, namely, on the political process, the issue of security, the human rights situation, humanitarian aid and the drug scourge.

With regard to the political process, the Secretary-General's report notes the efforts for reconciliation and the preparations for the elections in 2014. We hope that the ulema peace conference, to take place under the auspices of the High Peace Council, the outreach activities and the inter-Afghan dialogue, promoted by UNAMA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), will help to strengthen the basis of a true reconciliation in the country.

At the same time, we note the readiness stated by the President of the country to renew contact with the Taliban who wish to hold talks with the High Council. To that end, the commitment of the Afghan, Pakistan, British and French Governments to help bring together the various sensitivities of Afghan society in the context of an inclusive dialogue should be welcomed.

The convening and holding of presidential and provincial elections in a year's time remain crucial elements in the political process under way in Afghanistan. In December 2012, the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/907) noted a lack of compromise between the two houses of the National Assembly with respect to the appointment of a new President and members of the Independent Election Commission. Although the stalemate persists to this day, we nevertheless note some positive signs, such as the decision to begin the distribution of electronic national identity cards, beginning on 21 March 2013, and the active and continuous participation of political parties and civil society in electoral activities.

Moreover, we welcome the ongoing support of UNDP through the ELECT II electoral support project aimed at strengthening the legal and electoral capabilities of Afghan institutions. We also welcome the information exchange sessions aimed at harmonizing the efforts of international stakeholders in the electoral process. We also hope that the recommendations made by the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs following the recent assessment missions will enable the parameters for electoral assistance on the part of the United Nations to be defined. We call on the Afghan Government to preserve the independence of electoral institutions, so as to prevent a crisis that could undermine the political process.

Security in Afghanistan continues to be a matter of great concern, at a time when a progressive handover of security responsibilities is taking place from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to Afghan security institutions, which will henceforth be responsible for the security of almost all of the country. Indeed, many incidents, in particular the attack against the Jalalabad airfield in December 2012, the attack against the National Directorate of Security and its Director General, violence committed against civilians and attacks on humanitarian personnel, are all sources of concern. Togo nevertheless hopes that the capacity-building programmes for the Afghan National Police and National Army and the project to transform the National Police, which is currently a security force, into a law enforcement and neighbourhood police force will help to bring the security situation under control.

We are equally concerned about the human rights situation, in particular as it pertains to violence against women. We note, by way of example, the assassination in December 2012 of the Acting Director of the Department of Women Affairs in Laghman Province, which was the second assassination of the incumbent there in less than five months. We also note a 20 per cent increase in the number of women and girls killed or wounded over the past year. Nevertheless, we welcome the work of the United Nations Population Fund, UN-Women and the World Health Organization. Thanks to their support, an intake system has been established for treating victims of sexual violence and providing care for them.

With respect to the rights of children, we are grateful to the United Nations for having created the action plan for the prevention of underage recruitment and its annexes on the killing and maiming of children and on sexual violence against children. We welcome the strong support from the Afghan Minister for Foreign Affairs and his commitment to convene the Interministerial Steering Committee and Technical Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. We also welcome the decree by President Karzai on 16 February 2013 on the implementation of recommendations pursuant to the UNAMA findings regarding torture committed by many State institutions.

In the curent difficult circumstances, the humanitarian situation remains fragile, in spite of efforts to stabilize it. Togo is pleased with the initiatives undertaken to deal with those difficulties, in particular the meeting of 23 January 2012 between Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the implementation of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries. Appropriate solutions must also be found to the issue of internally displaced persons, as the number of such individuals continues to grow.

The issue of narcotics in Afghanistan is a recurring one. According to the preliminary results of the Opium Risk Assessment 2013 for many areas of the country by the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, poppy cultivation has increased for the third consecutive year. Given the alleged presence of jihadist and mujahideen elements from Afghanistan and the region among terrorist and drug-funded jihadist armed groups in the north of Mali, we believe the Secretary-General should determine whether illicit drugs produced in Afghanistan or transiting through it are having any impact on the region of the Sahel and West Africa.

In conclusion, we would like to express our great gratitude to the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan, UNAMA and the United Nations funds and programmes for their unrelenting efforts, in a most difficult context, to ensure a more promising future for Afghanistan, given the withdrawal of ISAF in December 2014. Clearly, with the announced withdrawal of the international forces coming up next year, many challenges remain in spite of the progress made and the desire of the Afghan authorities to work to reinstate full international sovereignty for their country. Here, Togo welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Afghan authorities to integrate Afghanistan into the system of globalization through strategic agreements with neighbouring countries and beyond. The support of the international community must thus be untiring. UNAMA's presence is also crucial, and no effort should be spared to ensure that it is able to continue its work.

Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea): I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on Afghanistan. I also thank Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan for his statement, and I would like to welcome Mr. Bob Carr, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, to the Security Council debate today.

Afghanistan faces a number of issues that it must tackle as it moves towards the security, political and economic transition in 2014. The phased transfer of lead

security responsibility from the International Security Assistance Force to Afghan security institutions is progressing as planned. The continued efforts of the Afghan Government to implement the commitments under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, including preparations for the elections, are noteworthy. The timely development of a credible electoral framework through a transparent and participatory process is the key to holding successful elections. The work of the High Peace Council in the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process should also be duly noted and encouraged.

We also welcome recent progress in the development arena, including the endorsement of the aid management policy. Over the course of the past year, the international community has demonstrated renewed commitment to providing long-term support for the Afghan people at conferences in Chicago in the United States of America, Kabul and Tokyo. Now, timely and faithful implementation of the commitments is vital to ensuring a successful transition. While the Afghan Government's ownership of the overall process must be ensured, the sustained assistance of the international community will be all the more critical for the peace and stability of Afghanistan leading up to 2014 and beyond.

We welcome the decline in the number of civilian casualties in 2012, the first such decline in six years. The international forces and Afghan authorities have made progress in minimizing the risk of civilian casualties. However, we are deeply concerned that women, girls and children continue to suffer enormously, including through the use of children as suicide bombers and the targeted killings of women.

Increased efforts to train the Afghanistan national security forces and provide them with all necessary support will remain crucial tasks in order to effectively protect civilians and ensure accountability.

Afghanistan's refugee situation remains one of the largest protracted such situations in the world, with nearly 3 million refugees and half a million internally displaced persons. We call on the Afghan Government to enhance its efforts to protect and assist them in order to ensure their sustainable return.

Another area of concern is the increasing production of, and trafficking in, narcotics in Afghanistan. With an increase in poppy cultivation for the third consecutive year, more efforts are needed to address that threat. We urge the international community and regional partners to further support Afghan-led efforts to tackle the drug problem.

The Government of the Republic of Korea has been actively supporting Afghanistan's capacity-building. As part of the provincial peconstruction team (PRT) evolution strategy, the Korean Government transferred its PRT base, previously located in Parwan province, to the Afghan Government at the end of last year, and is currently running a down-sized PRT. Furthermore, following a contribution of $15 million to the Afghan National Army trust fund in 2011, the Korean Government contributed an additional $15 million to that trust fund, and another $15 million to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan in 2012.

We appreciate the crucial role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in assisting the people of Afghanistan and laying the foundation for sustainable peace and development. With the adoption of today's resolution 2096 (2013) to extend the mandate of UNAMA for a year, we look forward to the Mission's continued role in supporting the Afghan Government in development and governance priorities, electoral preparations and the peace and reconciliation process. The Republic of Korea will remain committed to working with the Afghan Government and its people and will lend its full support to UNAMA in implementing its mandate.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate on Afghanistan. I also wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his briefing and the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Tanin, for his statement.

Thanks to the efforts of the Afghan Government and people, the overall transition of Afghanistan in recent years has proceeded smoothly, and remarkable progress has been achieved in peace and reconstruction. Afghanistan has taken important steps towards the full realization of the ultimate goal of an Afghanistan governed by Afghans.

Currently, the situation in Afghanistan is at a critical juncture of its transition. A stable and prosperous Afghanistan where all ethnic groups live together in harmony requires long-term efforts on the part of the Afghan Government and people, as well as sustained support and assistance by the international community. I wish to stress the following four points.

First, the 2014 presidential and provincial elections represent an important milestone in the Afghan political process. China welcomes the efforts made and the progress achieved by various parties in Afghanistan in preparing for the 2014 elections. We hope that the Afghan people will continue to pursue dialogue and consultations as a way to appropriately address their differences and ensure the success of the elections, so as to lay down a sound foundation for the transformation of the country.

Secondly, China supports the peace and reconciliation process led by the Afghan Government. We hope that the Government will listen carefully to the views of the people and the various political factions, expand the basis of reconciliation and achieve greater progress. We support the High Peace Council in continuing to play a positive role in promoting national reconciliation, and we welcome the assistance provided by Pakistan and other regional States.

Thirdly, peace and stability represent the basis for national reconciliation and economic development in Afghanistan. The security situation of the country still remains fragile, and China is concerned by the large number of civilian casualties. Any act causing innocent civilian casualties is unacceptable. All parties should comply with international humanitarian law and other relevant international law and fulfil their responsibility to protect civilians.

The transfer of responsibility for security to the Afghan National Security Forces has entered the fourth stage. The parties concerned in transferring security responsibility to the Afghan Government should take a responsible approach and proceed in an orderly manner and attend to enhancing the capacity-building of the Afghan army and police.

Fourthly, there is a need for increased assistance and continued support for the Kabul process. The parties concerned should effectively implement their assistance commitments and, in accordance with the priorities set forth in the Afghan National Development Strategy, support Afghanistan in enhancing its capacity to achieve economic and social development by itself. China supports Afghanistan in enhancing cooperation with other regional States on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit.

China supports the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in continuing to play a central role in coordinating international assistance for Afghan peace and reconstruction. China welcomes resolution 2096 (2013), adopted by the Security Council today, on the extension of the Mission's mandate. China is in favour of providing adequate resources to the Mission to implement its mandate. During the transition period, Afghanistan's national institution-building and its capacity for self-governance will continue to increase. China hopes that UNAMA will continue to engage in full consultations with the Afghan Government on the implementation of its Security Council mandate.

China has always been committed to good neighbourly relations with Afghanistan. It attaches importance to, and takes an active part in, the peace and reconstruction process of that country. We will continue to provide assistance to Afghanistan to the best of our abilities and play a constructive role for the early realization of peace, stability and development in Afghanistan.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for their remarks. I also welcome the presence of Mr. Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and of Mr. Ušackas, Special Representative of the European Union for Afghanistan, and I associate myself with the latter's statement.

With the end of the withdrawal of our combat troops from Afghanistan, a new phase is beginning in the relations between France and that country, a different sort of relations based on strengthened military and civilian cooperation. Since 2008, in Kapisa and Surobi, the French army had the responsibility of training the Afghan Security Forces and ensuring the transition with the local authorities. That task has been carried out successfully. French soldiers still present in Afghanistan are focusing now on the withdrawal of military equipment, on training and on the management of the military hospital in Kabul and of the airport. They are therefore in the service of the allied forces and of the population. A treaty of friendship and cooperation between our two countries has been signed and ratified. Financial assistance to Afghanistan has been distributed. Amounting to about €300 million, it will help the country to move from a wartime economy to a peacetime economy.

Afghanistan is on its way to regaining full exercise of its sovereignty at the end of the transition process. The international community is committed to maintaining

its support during the transformation decade. In that context, I would like to underscore three challenges that Afghanistan must face.

First, with regard to the fight against drug production and trafficking, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in its latest report, paints a worrisome picture of that situation and of the current trends. I will not revisit the numbers or the devastating effects of that scourge in Afghanistan and beyond its borders. It is clearly a matter of concern for the Afghan Government and the international community, which are mobilized together in the framework of the Paris Pact and the Istanbul Process. The impact of this issue on the future of Afghanistan is clear. We therefore feel that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan could legitimately integrate it if not into the heart of its current mandate, at least into its reflection on its future in Afghanistan, in full respect for the remit of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and, it goes without saying, in support of the efforts of the Afghan Government.

Secondly, the presidential elections of 5 April 2014 and the legislative elections of 2015 will be an important landmark for the international community and its long-term support for Afghanistan, as agreed in the Tokyo Framework. We call on the Afghan authorities to organize credible, inclusive, transparent and peaceful elections by establishing a reliable electoral census, an appropriate legislative framework and robust anti-fraud measures, and by guaranteeing the independence of the Independent Election Commission. We back the supporting role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's and the United Nations Development Programme.

Thirdly, as to reconciliation, only a genuine and inclusive inter-Afghan political process will ensure the emergence of a stable and peaceful Afghanistan. France supports the reconciliation efforts in that country and is prepared to contribute to them, of course in agreement with the Afghan authorities. In Chantilly last December, we welcomed a dialogue session that included different strata of Afghan society, organized in full transparency with the Afghan Government and in full respect for Security Council sanctions. Through the adoption of resolution 1988 (2011) and 2082 (2012), we also contributed to reorienting the sanctions regime in order to make it more conducive to reconciliation.

I conclude by welcoming the adoption of resolution 2096 (2013). We thank Australia for its role as facilitator. We also hope that what has not proved feasible this year — agreeing on a shorter and clearer text and a mandate focused on the realities on the ground and the priorities of the Afghan Government — will do so in the next. That should bolster the consistency of United Nations activities on the ground.

Mr. Bouchaara (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin by thanking the Russian presidency of the Security Council for having organized this debate. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for their detailed quarterly briefings. I also welcome Ambassador Tanin and thank him for his statement. Finally, I also wish to thank Australia, represented today by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, for its leadership within the Security Council on this matter.

The report before us today (S/2013/133) comes at a critical moment in the history of Afghanistan, one year before the presidential and provincial elections set for April 2014 and only a few months before the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force from Afghanistan. During the reporting period, the security situation in Afghanistan improved significantly. For the first time in six years, there has been a fall in the number of civilian casualties, at a time when the Afghan security forces have begun the fourth phase of the transition, taking control of territory that is home to the majority of the country's population.

The falling number of casualties can be attributed in part to the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme, which continues its roll-out, and to the significant role of the High Peace Council. By late December 2012, more than 6,000 combatants had joined the programme with the aim of laying down their arms and joining the Afghan National Army. In that context, the High Peace Council continues to strive to establish conditions conducive to reconciliation by launching direct dialogue with representatives of civil society, women's groups, religious leaders and political figures.

The year 2014 will be a watershed year for Afghanistan. Two major electoral dates have been set that are of particular importance because they will open a new chapter of Afghan history. In that regard, we must ensure that the elections are organized successfully by insisting that they be inclusive, reliable and transparent. In that context, we welcome the efforts of the Independent Election Commission to prepare

the elections. In that vein, the participation of political parties and civil society in the electoral process will have a positive impact on the coming elections, endowing them with greater legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of Afghan citizens.

Afghanistan has made great strides, although many challenges remain. Cooperation between Afghanistan and neighbouring countries will be critical in particular to resolving such issues as the fight against drug trafficking, counter-terrorism, trade, education, natural disaster management, and investment. Morocco commends the many initiatives launched in that respect, including the high-level meeting on the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan, held in Baku.

Cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community is equally important, inter alia, to fulfilling the commitments undertaken in the framework of the Tokyo Conference. The commitment of international donors and financial institutions to rebuilding Afghanistan is necessary if the country is to implement its national priorities.

In conclusion, my country believes it important for the process to continue the process that has been under way for several years to stabilize Afghanistan, which is emerging from a lengthy conflict, and to help it to stand on a more solid footing and to rebuild. That will require the international community's support, but it must be Afghan-led and for the benefit the Afghan people. We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for their outstanding work in Afghanistan.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): I thank you, Sir, for having organized this important debate on Afghanistan. I wish also to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his briefing on the current situation in Afghanistan. Let me also thank our good colleague Ambassador Tanin for his encouraging statement.

Rwanda is encouraged, of course, by the positive developments in Afghanistan, highlighted by the Secretary-General, despite the challenges that the Afghan Government is still facing. We appreciate the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in assisting the people and Government of Afghanistan, and we are convinced that resolution 2096 (2013), which was just adopted, will somehow enable the Mission to better implement its mandate, with a focus on the key priorities in Afghanistan.

Resolution 2096 (2013) reaffirms the strong commitment of the Council to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. We therefore express our appreciation to the International Security Assistance Force for the work it has done in fighting against anti-Government forces and in enhancing the capacity of the Afghan security forces. We welcome the decision to draw down the international forces comes 2014, which will open a new era in the history of Afghanistan.

We take note of the decrease in the number of incidents and civilian casualties for the first time in six years, but we remain concerned about the terrorist activities that are still being carried out in Afghanistan and that undermine the authority of the political and security institutions of that country. We particularly condemn the use of human shields and children as suicide bombers, and we call upon the Afghan authorities, with the support of the international community, to combat such terrorist activities.

Besides security, Rwanda also believes that reconciliation and national unity, through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process, are of paramount importance. We commend the efforts of the High Peace Council to foster reconciliation in Afghanistan, and we express our appreciation to UNAMA for supporting that process. We believe that only a highly inclusive dialogue can bring about lasting peace in Afghanistan. We welcome the decision taken by some members of the Taliban to renounce violence and terrorism and to engage in a political and reconciliation process with Kabul.

As we all know, reconciliation cannot be considered in isolation from regional dynamics. We are encouraged by the progress towards greater regional cooperation that has beeen made in recent months. We support the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan. In particular, we commend neighbouring Pakistan on its support for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan, which it has again demonstrated by releasing 26 Afghan Taliban in February.

Rwanda welcomes the holding of presidential and provincial council elections in April 2013. The elections will be a cornerstone of the ongoing democratic process in Afghanistan as the drawdown of international forces

is under way. We commend the Afghan Government for what it has already achieved in preparing for the elections. We request UNAMA and the United Nations Development Programme to continue their support in enhancing Afghanistan's electoral capacity.

However, we remain concerned about the human rights situation in Afghanistan, in particular the violence against women. In that regard, however, we need to view the situation from a historical perspective and to remember what was the condition of women during the Taliban regime. We are encouraged by the resolve of the Afghan Government in implementing the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women in Afghanistan. We call upon the international community to continue its support in that regard.

Needless to say, the war in Afghanistan, following a long period of Taliban obscurantism, had negative effects on the economic and humanitarian situation in the country. We deplore the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistant, where more than 3 million refugees have been registered in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan, not to mention the growing number of internally displaced persons, whose situation is aggravated by natural disasters and poverty. We welcome the July 2012 Tokyo Confererence, where donors pledged $16 billion in development assistance. We urge all international partners to materialize their support and pledges to Afghanistan, including through the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

Let me conclude by commending President Hamid Karzai and his Government for the tremendous achievements since 2001. We also commend the International Security Assistance Force and UNAMA troop-contributing countries for their sacrifice in the cause of peace, security and stability in Afghanistan. I would also like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Bob Carr, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia. I would like to commend him and our colleague Ambassador Quinlan for the work well done.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his report (S/2013/133) and for his comprehensive presentation to the Council this morning. I also wish to thank his Special Representative, Mr. Jan Kubiš, for his work as Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We welcome the commitment and dedication of UNAMA's staff, who, in demanding conditions, perform crucial work competently. Lastly, I would like to thank Ambassador Tanin for his very illuminating presentation on the priorities of his country.

Luxembourg associates itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union by its Special Representative for Afghanistan.

I shall address three points, namely, the commitment of the international community, the key role of the Afghan authorities and, finally, the protection of human rights in Afghanistan.

In renewing UNAMA's mandate today, we rightly acknowledge the long-term support of the international community for Afghanistan. The planned withdrawal of international troops by the end of 2014 should not lead to a withdrawal of the international community. Instead, we must move towards a renewal of our commitment to help Afghanistan achieve its transformation into a stable and democratic society. The international community must stand with Afghanistan during that critical period. Luxembourg has chosen to do just that by adopting a holistic approach that combines the tools of diplomacy, development and defence.

In the area of development cooperation, we particularly support the work of the World Food Programme in Afghanistan. Based on a multi-year commitment, we also contribute to the Afghanistan reconstruction funds administered by the World Bank. We also contribute in the European context. The European Union and its member States annually grant Afghanistan more than €1 billion in development aid.

Luxembourg has participated in the International Security Assistance Force since 2003. We committed ourselves at the NATO Chicago Summit to continue our substantial contribution to the financing of the Afghan National Security Forces, with an annual contribution of up to $5 million. Lastly, through the European Union, my country also participates in the training of the Afghan police.

The substantial assistance from the international community will bear fruit only if there is a shared commitment to implement the commitments made at the successive international conferences of recent years. In parallel, Afghanistan must continue its efforts in the areas of the rule of law, democratic elections, the fight against corruption, combating drug trafficking, and respect for human rights.

That brings me to the second point. Whatever may be the extent of the support of the international

community, the genuine key to success is ultimately in the hands of the Afghans themselves. Their political will will be crucial. That is why we fully support the goal of transition so as to enable the Afghan people to take charge of their own destiny gradually by assuming responsibility for security and reconstruction. Pride of place in that ownership effort must go to the electoral process and the process of reconciliation, both led by Afghans.

With regard to the preparations for the elections, we join the Secretary-General's call in his report urging the parties concerned to adopt a constructive attitude in order to avoid a deadlock, whose consequences would be severe. More generally, as noted by several speakers this morning, it is important to ensure broad participation and to put in place a credible and transparent electoral mechanism, so as to ensure that the outcome of the elections is widely acknowledged and accepted by the population. In that regard, it is essential that women can safely participate as voters and candidates alike in the upcoming elecctions.

In terms of national reconciliation, we support the initiatives of the High Peace Council, and we welcome the regional dimension that efforts at reconciliation have taken on in recent months.

Human rights is the third, and final, point I would like to address. Let us not forget that Afghanistan is first and foremost a country of more than 30 million people who yearn for a normal life for themselves and their families, including respect of their fundamental rights. In that context, we welcome the important place that is made in the mandate of UNAMA for human rights in general, and for the rights of women and children in particular.

With regard to the rights of children, we are very concerned about the continued recruitment and use of children by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups, inter alia, to commit suicide attacks. We are also concerned by the violations and other serious abuses against children, in particular the continuation of attacks against schools.

In contrast, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Afghan Government in the implementation of the action plan against the recruitment and use of children in the Afghan National Security Forces, signed on 30 January 2011. It is important that UNAMA continue to effectively support the Afghan authorities in the implementation of that plan, and that it devote the capabilities and expertise required by the Council to that end. Along the same lines, we welcome the appeal to the Secretary-General that he continue to give special treatment to the matter of children in armed conflict in his reports to the Council, in line with the pertinent resolutions. Indeed, that is an essential element in the Council's ability to support and follow up the activities in the area of protecting children.

In conclusion, Luxembourg would like to reiterate its full support for the mandate of UNAMA, which we have just renewed today. It is an ambitious mandate, one that will serve the Afghan people and testify to the will of the international community to stand beside the Afghan people.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his report (S/2013/133) and his statement this morning. We welcome back to the Council Special Representative Ján Kubiš. I would also like to thank Ambassador Tanin for his contribution to today's debate, as well as to thank Foreign Minister Carr and the delegation of Australia for their leadership in the Council on the issue before us.

The United Kingdom welcomes today's adoption of resolution 2096 (2013), which renews the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for a further 12 months. Let me take this opportunity to note the continued leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the hard work of his staff throughout the past year.

I would like to focus my comments today on four areas, namely, the transition of security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), the progress on, and prospects for, peace and reconciliation, the preparations for elections in 2014, and, more broadly, the international community's long-term commitment to Afghanistan.

Turning first to the security transition to the Afghan National Security Forces, let me pay tribute to all the women and men of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan and to the members of the Afghan National Security Forces who work alongside them. They continue to carry out their duties with great professionalism and courage. The United Kingdom is grateful for their outstanding contribution to the peace and security of Afghanistan.

ISAF has continued to transition security to the ANSF on schedule. This year, with the announcement of the fifth tranche, the ANSF will take the leading responsibility for the security of the whole Afghan population, approximately 27 million people. As the ANSF continues to grow in confidence and operational experience, so will the confidence that the Afghan population has in them grow. We remain convinced that they will be ready, willing and able to effectively manage Afghanistan's security after 2014, and to tackle any residual insurgent threat. They will have the full support of the United Kingdom and of the international community in doing so.

But tackling security concerns is only part of the picture. Tangible and lasting progress on peace and reconciliation must go hand in hand with that. In recent months, we have seen strong consensus emerge that a broad, inclusive political settlement offers the best prospect for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

We particularly welcome the efforts of Afghanistan and Pakistan to strengthen their relationship and their common understanding of the Afghan peace and reconciliation process. In February, the leaders of both countries agreed to increase cooperation between military and intelligence establishments, to strengthen coordination on Taliban prisoner releases from Pakistani detention, and to support the opening of an office in Doha for the purpose of peaceful negotiations between the Afghan High Peace Council and authorized representatives of the Taliban. That sends a clear message to the Taliban: now is the time to participate in a peaceful political process.

Another pillar in a sustainable peace will be credible elections that reflect the will of the Afghan people. Afghan-led preparations for presidential and provincial council elections in 2014 have started, and decisions have been taken on issues such as voter registration. The time is short, and the Afghan parliament should now prioritize consideration of electoral reforms. It is also important that the Independent Election Commission and Afghan authorities work to establish credible mechanisms to deal with complaints and to prevent fraud.

I have on many occasions emphasized the United Kingdom's long-term commitment to the Afghan people. Let me do so again. The United Kingdom will deliver on all our commitments to Afghanistan, now and beyond 2014. The United Kingdom's support for Afghanistan will be defined by more than just security. We will pursue a relationship built on prosperity, diplomacy and development, as set out in the enduring strategic partnership document signed in 2012.

The Afghan Government, with the support of the international community, should continue to make further progress in the areas that underpin sustained economic growth and development. Those include, in particular, areas such as education, health and other basic services for women and girls, as well as strengthened respect for human rights so that all can play a full part in the collective life of a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Mutual accountability is of paramount importance in order to achieve our shared objectives. The United Kingdom attaches great importance to that and will seek to play a major role in supporting our shared responsibilities, holding each other to account for the promises that we have made. We look forward to co-chairing the first ministerial review of progress against the Tokyo commitments in 2014.

As Afghanistan moves from transition into the transformation decade, we are focused on the great opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. A stable, secure and prosperous Afghanistan is in all our interests, and it is nothing less than that the Afghan people deserve.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank the Russian Federation for convening this debate. Allow me also to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the presentation of his report (S/2013/133) and for joining us today. I also thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin for his important statement, and I welcome the presence here today of Minister Bob Carr of Australia.

Our debate today offers us an opportunity to carry out a timely, in-depth assessment in preparation for post-2014 Afghanistan. We have commenced another critical and historic year for Afghanistan and for the United Nations. As we enter this new phase, we believe that peace and stability will depend upon the ability of the Afghan people themselves to ensure not only peace and security, but also democratic governance, national reconciliation, the rule of law and the protection of human rights during the political and military transition of 2014. In that context I would like to make the four observations.

First, we consider it is a requirement for peace and stability, as well as for the normalization of the

Afghan political arena, that credible, inclusive and transparent presidential elections be held in 2014, in strict accordance with the provisions of the Afghan Constitution. We therefore believe that all of us should follow closely the progress in electoral reform and the results of the work of the Independent Election Commission, as well as the future designation of its head. Both the Commission as well as the Electoral Complaints Commission should take advantage of the ongoing deliberations with the United Nations to continue strengthening their capacities.

Secondly, we consider that another important step in the political process is the necessary continuation of the Afghan-owned and Afghan-led national reconciliation. We support the efforts of Mr. Salahuddin Rabbani and the High Peace Council of Afghanistan to pursue the path of negotiation for a sustainable and lasting peace. At the same time, it is important to continue sending a clear message to political dissidents to the effect that reconciliation dialogue will be held only with those who renounce violence, have no links with terrorist organizations and respect the Constitution, including its provisions on human rights. We welcome the constructive engagement with Pakistan, including that conducted in a trilateral format under the auspices of the United Kingdom, given the fact that Pakistan is an important partner for Afghanistan and the region.

Thirdly, we commend the steady progress we have seen in the transfer of responsibility for security matters, already in its fourth stage, with 87 per cent of the population now under Afghan security. We understand that, under the transition, the role of the International Security Assistance Force will evolve from the area of combat to that of training, advising and support. In the post-2014 period, the Afghan security forces will have to demonstrate the degree to which they are ready to take on alone the fight against such global problems as terrorism, transnational organized crime and its links to illegal drug trafficking.

Fourthly, despite gradual progress in some areas, the human rights situation continues to be a concern for numerous reasons. We note that while the number of civilian casualties and injuries fell by 4 per cent over the past year, attacks on women and girls were up by 20 per cent, coupled with the deplorable situation that women and girls continue to face in Afghanistan. We trust that the Afghan Government will take concrete measures to protect and guarantee their rights, and we fully support all United Nations efforts in that area. We commend the thematic reports from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on violence against women, the situation of detainees and the issue of the protection of civilians. They have had an impact on the Government, which is already taking steps to respond to the findings and recommendations of the report on the situation of detainees.

Turning now to the development of regional cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours, we support the Istanbul Process. We are encouraged by the recent meeting in Baku, which endorsed implementation plans for confidence-building measures. We also commend the shared vision of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran aimed at finding strategic solutions for Afghan refugees.

Concerning UNAMA's mandate, Guatemala supports its renewal for 12 months. For the transition to be truly effective and irreversible, Afghanistan's institutions must be strong and capable. We believe that the United Nations in general, and UNAMA in particular, have an important role to play in the civilian aspects of the transition. There is reason to maintain a strong, decentralized presence throughout the country beyond 2014. We agree with the priorities identified in paragraph 66 of the Secretary-General's report. At the same time, we are responsible for ensuring that UNAMA has the resources necessary for providing the required support.

In conclusion, we believe that the United Nations has the multilateral experience, the capacity for coordination and the impartiality needed to meet the challenges and requirements of the transformation decade beyond 2014. We encourage everyone to pursue their Tokyo commitments and not to abandon the goals of the existing partnership between the international community and Afghanistan. We cannot lose sight of the broader picture when we know how much there is still to do. In the Security Council, Guatemala will act not only on the basis of its support for Afghanistan's leadership and ownership of the transition process, but also on the Council's primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): Mr. President, we welcome your initiative in holding a Security Council debate on Afghanistan. We are grateful for the participation of Mr. Bob Carr, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, in today's debate, and appreciate Ambassador Quinlan's leadership of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011).

Ambassador Zahir Tanin's statement gave us a complete perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing the people of Afghanistan. We thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his informative briefing today and his strong commitment to addressing the issues in Afghanistan and the region. The Secretary-General's latest report on Afghanistan (S/2013/133) is both synoptic and exhaustive. It updates us on recent developments, guides our discussion today, and outlines how the United Nations should help Afghanistan in the coming years. We thank the Secretary-General for his recognition of the concrete support being given by the Government of Pakistan to Afghan peace and reconciliation efforts. Our commitment to that process arises from our strong conviction that peace and stability in Afghanistan are essential to peace and stability in Pakistan and the entire region.

Afghanistan is on the cusp of three concurrent security, political and economic transitions, up to 2014 and in the decade of transformation. If those transitions are managed responsibly and skilfully, Afghanistan will see security and stability dawn, and so will the region. We are glad that this time there will be no precipitous disengagement of the international forces from Afghanistan. The drawdown is phased and well planned, and bilateral and regional mechanisms will be in place to help with the transition.

In the past 10 years, the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan, NATO, the United States and other countries have paid a heavy price in blood and resources. Pakistan's civilians and military personnel have made unprecedented sacrifices. All those sacrifices should not go in vain. The people of Afghanistan must succeed, and we must succeed with them.

The tide seems to be turning. We are encouraged by the recent progress in Afghanistan, despite problems rooted in more than three decades of conflict and strife. Pakistan has always supported and facilitated the work of the United Nations in Afghanistan. Resolution 2096 (2013), which the Security Council has adopted today, tasks the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to facilitate national reconciliation, to support the electoral process and governance and to promote socioeconomic development. We urge the continued engagement of the United Nations in institution-building, the peace process, counter-narcotics efforts, the return and rehabilitation of refugees and the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

The United Nations long-term political role should be determined by the realities on the ground and, more important, by the consent and aspirations of the people of Afghanistan. We agree with the Secretary-General that our expectations must remain realistic. If there are temporary setbacks, we must stay the course. The Council today renewed the mandate of UNAMA for another 12 months. We take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General's Special Representative Ján Kubiš and his team for their commendable work in Afghanistan.

As an enabler and capacity-builder, the UNAMA footprint must be supported by adequate resources. Donor fatigue and fiscal constraints in the international economic climate should not squeeze the flow of assistance and investment to Afghanistan. It is imperative that all pledges be honoured and translated into action. We welcome the phased transfer of lead security responsibility from the International Security Assistance Force to Afghan security institutions.

Pakistan's bilateral relations with Afghanistan are driven by a sense of shared destiny. Our cooperation spans the entire spectrum of political, economic, educational and cultural relations. To deepen our ties, we look forward to the early finalization of a strategic partnership agreement between our two countries, which is being negotiated.

We are strengthening Pakistan-Afghanistan military and intelligence cooperation and making the trilateral mechanism comprising Pakistan, Afghanistan and the International Security Assistance Force more effective. The stability and sanctity of our international border with Afghanistan is a shared responsibility. In that spirit, Pakistan has proposed setting up a mechanism at the Interior Minister's level to devise and enforce a border management regime in order to interdict all kinds of criminals, including terrorists, drug traffickers and smugglers. Pakistan has also established more than 1,000 posts along its border with Afghanistan. More than 140,000 Pakistani troops are deployed on our side of the border, at huge financial cost. Illegal cross-border movement will drop dramatically if security is beefed up on the other side of the border as well.

Pakistan is committed to an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process. We agree with the Secretary-General that Afghanistan will be able to achieve stability, growth and prosperity only if there is peace in that country. Pakistan supports

the efforts of the High Peace Council to promote reconciliation in Afghanistan. We endorsed the travel-ban exemptions inserted into resolution 2082 (2012) last December. We hope that those exemptions will lead to the desired flexibility for engagement and dialogue. At the request of the High Peace Council, Pakistan has released a number of Taliban prisoners in good faith and after giving prior intermission to the Afghan authorities. Inclusivity will guarantee the success of the reconciliation process. All stakeholders must be on board. Instead of being hamstrung by caveats and qualifications, all sides would benefit from building on convergences, however thin they may appear at the moment. Afghanistan's international partners have an important role in helping the principal interlocutors to move towards that direction, but only the people of Afghanistan can craft a road map for national reconciliation and determine their political future.

Multiple regional approaches are being pursued to deal with the complex challenges of peace, security and economic reconstruction in Afghanistan. We are also actively participating with regional and international partners under various trilateral and quadrilateral formats. Our effort is to keep them concentric, coordinated and noncompetitive. In that regard, the summit-level meetings among the United Kingdom, Afghanistan and Pakistan have been most useful. All those processes should culminate in economic and commercial cooperation and help the neighbourhood root out terrorism, extremism and illicit narcotics. We must counter terrorists' hideous narratives masqueraded as ideology and staunch their flawed symbolism. They do not speak for Islam or for Muslims.

Counter-narcotics should be one of the top priorities. We appreciate the efforts being made by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Narcotics Control Board to track and control the production and trafficking of illicit narcotics. That serious threat demands massive efforts and resources. We strongly recommend measures to enhance the capacity of the Afghanistan National Security Forces in that regard. UNAMA could also play a supportive role to the UNODC activities in counter-narcotics. Pakistan's Anti-Narcotics Force is stretched to its limits in interdicting drug traffickers from across the borders. We are trying to evolve a regional approach to tackle the problem. In November 2012, Pakistan organized the regional ministerial conference on counter-narcotics, which was attended by high-level representatives from 13 countries. In follow-up, we are working to establish a regional contact group on counter-narcotics.

The spotlight on the security and political issues often eclipses the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Pakistan still hosts more than 3 million Afghan refugees. More refugees should be repatriated to Afghanistan and absorbed there. Creating pull factors in Afghanistan is part of the solution strategy on Afghan refugees agreed to in Geneva this year. We count on the international community's support for the implementation of the strategy.

We wish the valiant people of Afghanistan a bright and prosperous future. As they move towards that destination, Pakistan will remain their committed and steadfast partner. What we need most is faith in each other and a vision for a common future.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Russian Federation.

We thank the Secretary-General for his briefing on the situation in Afghanistan. We welcome the participation in today's meeting of the Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Mr. Ján Kubiš. We also would like to thank the representative of Afghanistan, Mr. Tanin, for his detailed briefing.

Afghanistan is approaching a watershed in 2014, when important events are scheduled to take place — presidential and provincial elections, the withdrawal of the international military contingents, the re-hatting of the residual military presence and the so-called international training mission. Although there has been an ongoing process of national reconciliation and tangible changes in the social fabric of Afghan society, the current situation in Afghanistan raises certain concerns with regard to the future of the country and the region as a whole.

Terrorism, extremism and drug crimes are far from being eradicated in Afghanistan. We have not yet seen a breakthrough with regard armed combat with the Taliban. Many Afghan provinces remain fully or partially under Taliban control, and the Taliban continues to carry out terrorist attacks across Afghanistan. Of particular concern is the continuing spread of terrorist activities from the northern provinces of Afghanistan into Central Asian countries.

Those countries, along with the Russian Federation, are member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The danger remains that leaders of the International Security Assistance Force, NATO and troop-contributing countries could unjustifiably or artificially accelerate the process of transferring responsibilities for the security of the country to Afghan armed forces without taking into account the true situation in those regions where the transfers occur or the state of preparedness and military capacity of the relevant sub-units of the Afghan National Security Forces. For example, we do not understand how it is that the completetion of the process is being planned for the summer of this year, in terms of its fourth and fifth phases, which cover the most problematic areas of the country.

We attach great importance to the role of Pakistan in the settlement of Afghanistan. It was our hope that the conclusion of a treaty on strategic partnership — the drafting of which was agreed between Afghanistan and Pakistan in London in February — would facilitate enhanced security in the region and the achievement of a political settlement in Afghanistan, however difficult that may seem today.

However, dialogue with the armed opposition will be positive only if led by the Afghan Government and if the armed fighters comply strictly with the principles of reconciliation by laying down their arms, recognizing the Constitution and cutting all ties with Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations. Those principles must guide negotiations with the Taliban, inter alia, through the contact office in Doha. It is unfortunate that attempts to dilute those three principles continue. It is important that, in exchange for concluding a reconciliation agreement, the Taliban not cause the country to lose all of its gains of the past 11 years.

We believe that the Security Council sanctions regime must remain the most important counter-terrorism tool — with respect to individuals, groups, entities and organizations involved with the Taliban — in building peace, stability and security in Afghanistan. We support the measures agreed by the Security Council to improve the sanctions regime in terms of the Taliban, stipulating, inter alia, the establishment of strengthened, flexible and transparent procedures aimed at improved functioning through closer contact with the Afghan Government. In the future we will continue to work to ensure the effectiveness of the sanctions as well as strict compliance by States with their relevant international obligations.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported the Afghan Government's efforts to achieve national reconciliation, combat violence and terrorism and establish conditions for the long-term stabilization of the country and the entire region. We will continue to assist Afghanistan in strengthening the military capacities of the Afghan national security forces. Thus, upon the request of the Government, in 2012, we voluntarily provided arms and armaments for the Afghan National Police.

The prospect of a continuous, long-term, foreign military presence in Afghanistan is not welcomed by us nor by other States of the region. After completing the stabilization mission, the foreign contingents will no longer have a role. Moreover, far from acting to deter terrorism, their presence has become a factor in additional regional tensions. It is important that military bases be truly transferred to the Afghan armed forces, which means that they must be under Afghan leadership and staffed by Afghan fighters.

It is also important to resolve the issue of drugs in Afghanistan in order to ensure long-term stability there, given that the 2014 factor could undermine advances achieved in the security sector and risk Afghanistan's becoming a breeding ground for terrorism and organized crime. All of the factors of the Afghan drug threat can be considered to constitute threats to international peace and security.

It is our shared responsibility to our Afghan partners to take the necessary measures to stem the drug threat. We therefore consider it necessary and unavoidable to eliminate the opium poppy fields and the drug processing laboratories in Afghanistan, just as is being done to combat drugs issuing from other regions, such as Latin America. We remain convinced that every effort must be aimed at supporting the efforts not only of the Afghan national forces but also of the international presence, based on the principle that whosoever effectively controls the territory bears responsibility for whatever takes place upon it.

We are disappointed that NATO did not respond to the Collective Security Treaty Oorganization (CSTO) proposal to cooperate in that area and that the ISAF has opposed CSTO participation in counter-narcotics activities. We also do not understand why there is

opposition to the addition of specific appropriate tasks to the UNAMA mandate.

In the context of the necessary activation of the international forces, we attach great priority to carrying out the tasks set forth during the third ministerial conference of the Paris Pact initiative on stemming the Afghan drug threat, which took place in Vienna on 16 February 2012, as an important step towards an agreement on including drug traffickers on the United Nations sanctions list.

We welcome any rational measure to provide active assistance to Afghanistan and its neighbouring States aimed at countering the global drug trafficking threat. The Russian Federation is increasing its contribution to such assistance through the United Nations. A great impetus in efforts to counter the Afghan drug threat could be provided through large joint projects aimed at Afghanistan involving the United Nations and development projects in Central Asia. Regional organizations and neighbouring countries should contribute to the normalization of Afghanistan and adjacent areas, in particular through comprehensive economic cooperation.

We consider it appropriate to improve activities under existing formats, first and foremost the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Afghanistan and other SCO observer States can actively participate in the organization's activities to draft preventive measures to counter regional threats. We welcome UNAMA's intention to actively cooperation with the SCO.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Denmark.

Mr. Søvndal (Denmark): I thank you, Sir, for giving me the floor. Let me, from the outset, fully align myself with the statement made by the European Union delegation on behalf of the European Union. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his thoughtful and thorough report (S/2013/133) and for his informative briefing. Let me also welcome the 12-month extension of UNAMA's mandate.

Afghanistan has made tremendous leaps forward since 2001. The security, political and economic transition processes leading up to 2014 are all well under way, although the situation remains fragile. The Afghan national security forces are making good headway in taking the lead in security operations across the country. Preparations are under way for the presidential elections in 2014 and for the parliamentary elections the year after. And economically, Afghanistan has seen a steady growth in the past decade, even if the country is still dependent on international aid. That progress is due to the determined efforts of the Government of Afghanistan and the concerted support of the international community and the United Nations. However, there is no room for complacency. We all have to stay focused. There is a real risk that much of what has been achieved could be lost, if our efforts are not sustained.

As for Denmark, I can assure the Council that we will continue to support the Afghan people on their path towards a democratic, stable and secure Afghanistan. Recently, the Danish Government announced a two-year plan for Danish engagement in Afghanistan for the period 2013-2014. Within that framework, we have just decided to withdraw our combat troops six months earlier than previously foreseen. We remain committed to assisting the Afghan people beyond 2014 with training, advice, assistance and financial support to the Afghan National Security Forces and with development assistance. I am pleased to inform the Council that Danish development assistance will actually increase in the years from 2013 to 2017 to an average of 530 million Danish kroner per year — approximately $100 million per year — making Afghanistan the largest recipient of Danish development assistance. We urge others to follow that example.

As reflected in the briefing and the other statements today, there is already a lot of attention focussed on next year's presidential elections. It is vital that those elections be inclusive and transparent and that the result be broadly accepted by the Afghan people. This is especially important because Afghans clearly have taken to their hearts the concept of electing their future leaders. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the role of UNAMA and of the United Nations system in assisting the Afghan Government in preparing for the elections.

We see a strong need for a dynamic UNAMA in the years to come. UNAMA should continue to use its good offices and its political outreach in support of Afghan-led political processes. It should also continue to promote human rights, including the rights of women and children, and support the strengthening of the capacity of Afghan institutions.

To that end, UNAMA needs adequate resources. We are concerned about the recent cuts in UNAMA's 2013 budget and would like to stress the importance of providing the Mission with adequate resources. It is vital that we do not hamper the ability of UNAMA to fulfil its mandate at this critical time.

As recognized by the Secretary-General in his report, UNAMA and the other United Nations organizations present in Afghanistan must adjust as the security, political and economic transition in Afghanistan progresses. The role of the United Nations must, of course, reflect increased Afghan leadership and ownership. We are therefore looking forward to a thorough discussion of the future role of the United Nations and UNAMA in Afghanistan as we approach the transformation decade.

Only by working together can the Afghan Government and its international partners realize the vision of the transformation decade for Afghanistan. The Afghan Government and people can rest assured that Denmark will not leave Afghanistan in 2014. Our cooperation will change as our military presence is drawn down, but our support of Afghanistan and of the Afghan people remains steadfast.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Mr. Tuomioja (Finland): Finland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

The situation in Afghanistan is at a turning point. Afghanistan is going through multiple transition processes at the same time. Those processes are interlinked and equally important. The Afghan National Security Forces will soon be fully responsible for security in the whole country.

The Government of Afghanistan is committed to crucial reforms in governance. There is still a lot of work to be done in that sector, and Afghanistan should not be left alone during these critical years. Finland is fully committed to supporting Afghanistan when the country embarks on the transformation decade.

Afghanistan has become one of Finland's largest development partners. Our total official development assistance to Afghanistan between 2013 and 2017 is scheduled to be almost $200 million.

International aid is needed to build on the gains that the Afghan Government has achieved in the past years. Good governance, democracy and the rule of law are some of the most important areas that we need to support in the coming years. At the same time, we expect the Afghan Government to fulfil its obligations under the mutual commitments made, including the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

Human rights, particularly women's rights, are the cornerstone of Afghanistan's development. To that end, Finland will continue its cooperation with Afghanistan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

Ever since the overthrow of the Taliban, there have been important gains in strengthening human rights and the rule of law. Nevertheless, a lot remains to be done, and no backsliding can be allowed. Afghan citizens, in particular women, still face insecurity in public spaces and at home, as well as a lack of access to an effective and fair justice system and legal representation.

It is of vital importance for Afghanistan's development that there be a strong international civilian presence, under Afghan leadership, in the country after the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force. UNAMA has a central role in supporting Afghanistan's development efforts, providing good offices for the peace process, promoting and protecting human rights and coordinating international aid efforts.

We are extremely concerned about the budget cuts that UNAMA is facing. If fully implemented, those cuts would seriously hamper the Mission's ability to maintain a meaningful presence across the country. It is imperative that UNAMA be granted adequate resources to fully perform its mandated tasks. I would respectfully urge the Security Council to do everything in its power to ensure that UNAMA is granted adequate resources to fulfil its important mandate. We owe that to the people of Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas, Special Representative of the European Union for Afghanistan.

Mr. Ušackas (European Union) (*spoke in Russian*): I should like at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you and the Russian Federation on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March.

(*spoke in English*)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Norway, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2013/133) and presentation, as well as Ambassador Tanin for his report.

Last July in Tokyo the international conference reaffirmed the partnership between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community. The Tokyo Framework is the core structure governing mutual accountability between Afghanistan and its development partners. Its implementation remains paramount in achieving a successful transition and transformation in Afghanistan. In that regard, the EU welcomes the recently presented progress in the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board meeting, endorsing four national priority programmes. The finalized set of those programmes should allow for the more rational allocation of donors' resources in line with the country's priorities.

Afghanistan has made substantial economic progress over the past 10 years, but a number of challenges remain. As Afghanistan continues to move towards economic self-reliance, it will be vital to build confidence in the Afghan economy and attract and retain foreign and domestic investment. It is important that this confidence not be undermined. Therefore, it is vital that the International Monetary Fund programme remain on track and that the structural reforms suggested by the World Bank on private mining investment, the introduction of the planned value-added tax, deep customs reforms to reduce opportunities for corruption and leakage at borders, the improvement of land management and land acquisition, and the strengthening of internal and external controls will be put in place.

Corruption continues to be a major problem that touches the lives of many ordinary Afghans. It is vital that the Afghan Government visibly tackle this issue in order to strengthen the legitimacy of the State, improve service delivery for citizens and establish a business environment conducive to domestic and foreign investment.

Enduring peace in Afghanistan will have to rest on a political settlement comprising all national, regional and international stakeholders. We believe that reconciliation has to be a totally inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process. Nevertheless, the European Union and its member States stand ready to support the process with the advice and assistance we have to offer, drawing from our own rich experience in conflict resolution.

The EU will continue to support the High Peace Council. We also welcome the recent developments in the infra-Afghan dialogue towards reconciliation, including efforts to open an office in Doha, as well as the positive steps towards an improvement in relations with Pakistan and Afghanistan. Several EU member States have also facilitated important events, including the Chantilly talks in France and the United Kingdom's trilaterals between the United Kingdom, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

With regard to the human rights situation, the European Union thanks the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for publishing the report on the treatment of conflict-related detainees in Afghan custody in January 2013, and we welcome the constructive response of the Government of Afghanistan to that report. We thank UNAMA for publishing its annual report on protection of civilians in armed conflict, and we support its recommendations. We also thank UNAMA for the report on the implementation of the law on elimination of violence against women in Afghanistan, and encourage the Afghan Government to continue to work towards better implementation of this law. In this vein, we also wish to reiterate the importance of the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and all subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security.

We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to appoint new, qualified human rights commissioners as soon as possible. The delay in their appointment continues to constrain the functioning of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. The EU will continue its support for civilian policing, which is essential to strengthening the rule of law and contributes to the promotion of human rights.

Assistance to the Afghan National Police while it is refocusing on these tasks is of significant importance.

With regard to the elections, the European Union welcomes and is committed to continuing to support the efforts of the Special Representative in implementing his mandate with regard to the holding of presidential elections in April 2014 and parliamentary elections in 2015 — elections that should be Afghan-owned and Afghan-driven, inclusive, transparent and with a legitimate outcome broadly accepted by the Afghans.

We emphasize the importance of adopting a sound legal electoral framework, including the establishment of a credible complaints mechanism. We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to appoint the chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission and its commissioners through a consultative process so that they may be accepted by the Afghans as impartial and competent. We stress the importance of the Commission putting in place a robust mechanism for fraud prevention. Election preparations should be transparent and inclusive, and they should involve all relevant stakeholders, including the Independent Electoral Commission, the Parliament, the Government, the opposition, political parties and civil society.

Counter-narcotics is a cross-cutting issue and should be tackled in a holistic way. The EU is contributing to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime programme in Afghanistan, as well as complementary regional elements on enhancing border management. Moreover, the European Union is promoting the development of a national policy for agriculture, encouraging alternative livelihoods to poppy production. The EU is also supporting the Heart of Asia process and the creation of a new regional paradigm that would help to reconcile respective security interests and gradually build new patterns of mutual interdependence, interconnectivity, trust and confidence.

The EU reiterates its full support for UNAMA's essential role during the transition and beyond. UNAMA will have a vital role to play in enabling Afghanistan and the international community to work effectively together to fulfil the commitments made in Tokyo and in monitoring the human rights and humanitarian situation. UNAMA must be properly mandated, adequately present in the country and sufficiently resourced to fulfil that role, in particular during the transition year 2014. To this end, we support the proposed extension of a strong UNAMA mandate.

As the Special Representative for the European Union in Afghanistan for the past three years, I have witnessed the progress that we have collectively achieved in support of Afghanistan. We must all draw lessons from the past. We have to demonstrate the staying power of continued support for Afghanistan through the transformation decade.

Respecting the Bonn and Tokyo commitments is important not only for Afghan citizens, but as a sign of progress to taxpayers in the donor countries. The exceptional support pledged in Chicago and Tokyo will be continued only if the presidential elections in 2014 are conducted in a credible, inclusive and transparent manner and produce a legitimate outcome; if genuine steps are undertaken to deal with corruption, justice and human rights, especially those of women; and if an environment conducive to economic development and revenue generation is created. We count on Afghanistan to show real commitment to achieving our agreed objectives, and we will need Afghanistan's neighbours to take the lead on regional cooperation, together with and in support of the Government of Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I can assure the Council once again that the European Union is committed to Afghanistan for the long term. In that regard, we look forward to the swift conclusion of our cooperation agreement on partnership and development as soon as possible.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to address the Council.

(*spoke in English*)

This meeting is particularly timely, given the renewal of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) mandate today. The year ahead will be a crucial test for Afghan leaders. The future of a sustainable and functional Afghan democracy can rest only upon credible and constitutional elections. We welcomed the Independent Election Commission's announcement last fall that the next presidential elections will take place on 5 April 2014, and Canada notes that President Karzai's tenure is coming to a close at the end of his second mandate.

Canada encourages the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the Afghan Government to press forward with the strengthening of the electoral

process. We note with concern that the likelihood of irregularities and fraud remains high and must be mitigated well in advance of elections. It is essential, in our view, that the democratic opposition be able to exercise its full rights, as prescribed by the Constitution and as affirmed by Afghans themselves. To that end, we encourage the Government to ensure that the process is transparent and inclusive. We welcome the upcoming debate within the Afghan Parliament to finalize the electoral and IEC structure laws, and we remain committed to working with the Government of Afghanistan's executive and legislative branches to ensure that the voices of all Afghan citizens, including women, will be heard and honoured.

However, elections alone do not make a vibrant, inclusive and democratic society; the Government of Afghanistan must also deliver on its rule of law and human rights commitments. UNAMA's most recent report on the elimination of violence against women noted that there remained a disturbing under-reporting of incidents of violence against women, and a lack of serious investigation into credible allegations. More needs to be done to implement the important provisions of that law. More must be done to uphold the integrity of the relationship between Afghan women and their laws. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission is essential for the defence of these rights, among others, and the Government of Afghanistan must move forward with the appointment of commissioners. We caution and stress that those appointments should be merit-based, transparent and inclusive, lest the Government be seen to actively subvert the Afghan people and their emerging democracy.

(*spoke in French*)

On the occasion of the Security Council meeting on Afghanistan held in September 2012 (see S/PV.6840), Canada emphasized the importance of improving Government transparency and accountability to ensure that the funds pledged by the international community at the Tokyo Conference are used effectively and appropriately. Since then, Canada has worked with the Government of Afghanistan, UNAMA and other members of the Accountability Framework technical and steering committees to ensure that Afghanistan and the international community respect their mutual agreements undertaken in Tokyo. The Accountability Framework is essential to empowering the Afghan people, promoting lasting trust among the Afghan people, and upholding the trust of donor countries throughout the transition period.

Canada also views positively the efforts of the Heart of Asia countries to move forward a regional process comprising specific and cooperative measures to overcome the current challenges with regard to security and the economy. The constructive participation of Afghanistan's neighbours in the country's long-term stability and development is absolutely essential to realizing that region's significant potential during the transformation decade.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada welcomes the progress made in recent months in the peace and reconciliation process. We reiterate our insistence that women's rights not be forsaken for the sake of stability, as well as our support for an Afghan-led and -owned process. More can and should be done to ensure that the opponents of peace do not derail the reconciliation process through acts of terrorism.

(*spoke in French*)

All countries of the region should implement substantial and agreed commitments in order to improve security in Afghanistan. In particular, they should firmly deal with the threat posed by the extremist insurgent groups operating on both sides of the border that undermine the stability of South-East Asia. The people of Pakistan and of other countries of the region who wish to see peace with their Afghan neighbour in the context of shared prosperity in Central and South Asia should see those wishes respected.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada fully supports firm action against terrorists who seek to undermine peace through indiscriminate attacks on Afghan civilians. For that reason, we welcome the United Nations listing of the Haqqani Network as an entity that constitutes a threat to the stability and security of Afghanistan. We will ensure that, in Canada, the full legal weight of that listing is brought to bear on members and supporters of the Haqqani Network. We encourage all United Nations Members to do the same in their national jurisdictions.

Security will remain a key challenge for Afghanistan during the transition phase. Canada finds the obfuscations of truth or statements lacking hard facts during the security transition to be deeply

troubling. It is never appropriate to politically posture over the fallen or under the tragic circumstances of innocent lives lost. As the transfer of lead security responsibility to the Afghan forces is under way, it is equally essential that the Afghan people be aware of where accountability rests. We look forward to the final stage of the transition, where Afghans will assume full security responsibility for the entire country by the end of 2014. Canada has worked closely with the Government of Afghanistan and our international partners to train and prepare the Afghan National Security Forces to take over security responsibility. We remain committed to ensuring that the people of Afghanistan can access the security and democracy that they have been promised by their leaders.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Ragaglini (Italy): Italy endorses the statement made by the observer of the European Union and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

We welcome the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and we fully support the Mission's fundamental role in contributing to the stabilization and development of Afghanistan. We praise the generous efforts of the women and men of UNAMA, who work to assist the Afghan people, often in trying circumstances, under the commendable leadership of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Afghanistan. UNAMA is a fundamental pillar of the international civilian presence in the country and contributes substantially to helping Afghanistan to achieve meaningful results in fields such as economic and social development, enhancing respect for human rights and strengthening institutions.

Afghanistan is entering a period of critical importance to its long-term stabilization. The last two phases of the transition are starting and should be completed in less than two years. Presidential and political elections are approaching, and the recent developments are fuelling optimism for the reconciliation process. All those processes focus on a single purpose: the gradual assumption of full responsibility by the Afghan people and Government for their country.

The international community has given assurances that it will stand by Afghanistan through the transition process and beyond, in the transformation decade. The Conference held in Tokyo last July defined the framework of mutual commitments that should shape the long-term relationship between Afghanistan and its partners. Now is the time to make the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework operational and to take full advantage of its potential as a driving force for the sustainable development of Afghanistan. For donor countries such as Italy to fully honour their pledges, it is particularly important that Afghanistan make further tangible progress in areas such as democratic reforms, electoral processes, good governance, anti-corruption measures and the protection and promotion of human rights. In particular, the Italian Government, in accordance with our public opinion, will continue to monitor the situation of women, which we consider to be of paramount importance.

The upcoming presidential elections are a major opportunity for the Afghan authorities to translate their commitments into concrete achievements. In order for Afghanistan to pursue stability and infuse new optimism into the prospects for the post-2014 scenario, there must be a credible, transparent and inclusive electoral process. We encourage the Afghan Government, in partnership with the international community and UNAMA, to lay a solid foundation for elections and to spare no effort to achieve the broadest possible consensus on the rules of the game by reaching out to opposition groups, civil society and all the relevant stakeholders. That is the only way to foster voter participation, make the process more inclusive and ensure the legitimacy of its outcome.

The elections are closely connected to the political process to promote national reconciliation under Afghan leadership and ownership. We welcome the recent encouraging developments, including the more constructive attitude in the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Successful national reconciliation, based on the shared principles of the Afghan Government and the international community, could be a milestone towards ensuring peace and prosperity as long as it is not accompanied by reversals in civil liberties, human rights and the democratic achievements. To avoid such a development, due consideration must be given to the concerns of women and civil society.

The destiny of Afghanistan is in the hands of its people and its institutions. However, strengthened regional cooperation is crucial to fostering economic development and to tackling common threats.

Many initiatives are under way, but there is still room for greater engagement. We appreciate the dynamism of the Istanbul Process and encourage the participating countries to remain fully committed to it. Italy is ready to contribute to a genuine regional ownership of the process by participating actively in confidence-building measures on counter-narcotics and regional infrastructure.

Progress in the transition process and the gradual downsizing of the international military coalition will test the governance and development capacity of Afghanistan at the national and subnational levels. At this delicate juncture, we are convinced that UNAMA has a crucial role to play by leading and coordinating the international community's civilian efforts. That will contribute to the smooth completion of the transition and, looking beyond 2014, to the strengthening of Afghan institutions and the economy. We therefore reiterate Italy's support for the extension of UNAMA's mandate, with the recommendation that the Mission be provided with the resources needed to fulfil it.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Nishida (Japan): At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the entire staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), under the leadership of Special Representative Ján Kubiš. Japan welcomes the adoption of resolution 2096 (2013), which renews UNAMA's mandate and reconfirms the long-term commitment of the United Nations to durable peace in Afghanistan. I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of ensuring adequate resourcing in order for UNAMA to fulfil its mandate, as described in resolution 2096 (2013).

With more than 11 years behind us, Afghanistan, with the unwavering support of the international community, has gone down a long and uneven path towards sustainable peace. I am confident that Afghanistan now finds itself on the right track. In addition to the long-term commitment of the United Nations, intensive regional efforts for the security and stability of Afghanistan, such as the Istanbul Process, have constantly been put forward at various levels.

On this occasion, I would like to reaffirm that Japan remains steadfastly committed to the long-term stability of Afghanistan beyond the completion of the security transition in 2014. Our new, recently announced contributions since the beginning of the year include assistance for security, with support for the Afghan National Police; governance support through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund; infrastructure building, including contributions to the Afghanistan infrastructure trust fund; and humanitarian assistance. In total, the assistance amounts to more than $570 million and demonstrates Japan's determination to fulfil the mutual commitments made at the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan.

The year 2013 is of critical importance for Afghanistan in achieving its considerable goals in 2014. Therefore, with these international and regional accompaniments, it is now incumbent upon Afghanistan, with its strong political will, to make steady and concrete strides forward, especially in the following three areas, where Japan believes tangible outcomes are indispensable.

First, as stated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/133), the timely development of a credible electoral framework for the presidential election is a key Government commitment under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. Japan once again reiterates the importance of attaining deliverables such as the passage of electoral laws and the appointment of qualified Independent Election Commission senior appointees before the senior officials' meeting scheduled for 3 July. Now we must focus more on substance rather than mere process.

Secondly, further building the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces is the foremost priority in ensuring that the dividends of the security transition are irreversible. Japan welcomes the announcement of the fourth tranche, made in December 2012, under which 87 per cent of the population will soon live in areas controlled by Afghan security. The increasing number of ex-combatants enrolled in the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme is also very encouraging.

Nevertheless, we must not turn away from the fact that the number of serious security incidents remains deplorably high and includes an increase in internal attacks. In order to control the security situation, the Afghan Security Forces needs to enhance its operational capacity, in terms of both quantity and quality. In addition to quantitative reinforcement, a wide range of qualitative reforms are desperately needed in order to overcome challenges such as the low literacy rate,

the high turnover and the lack of capable leaders and trainers. This past month, Japan decided to contribute an additional $122 million for the Afghan National Police through the United Nations Development Programme's Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan. We once again stress the need for that police support to be used in a transparent and effective manner and be followed by achieving concrete enhanced capability for the Afghan National Police.

Lastly, lasting stability in Afghanistan can be achieved only when all the other efforts are accompanied by the advancement of an Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process. The increased dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan and their closer cooperation on issues such as the release of Afghan Taliban detainees are welcome developments. The new procedure to facilitate requests for travel-ban exemptions based on resolution 2082 (2012) is also expected to provide support for other initiatives with the same goal. I would also like to recall that the whole peace process is supported by the relationship of mutual trust among all the stakeholders, including the trust between the Afghan Government and the international community.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are still several speakers inscribed on my list. Given the lateness of the hour, with the consent of the Council, I shall suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m.